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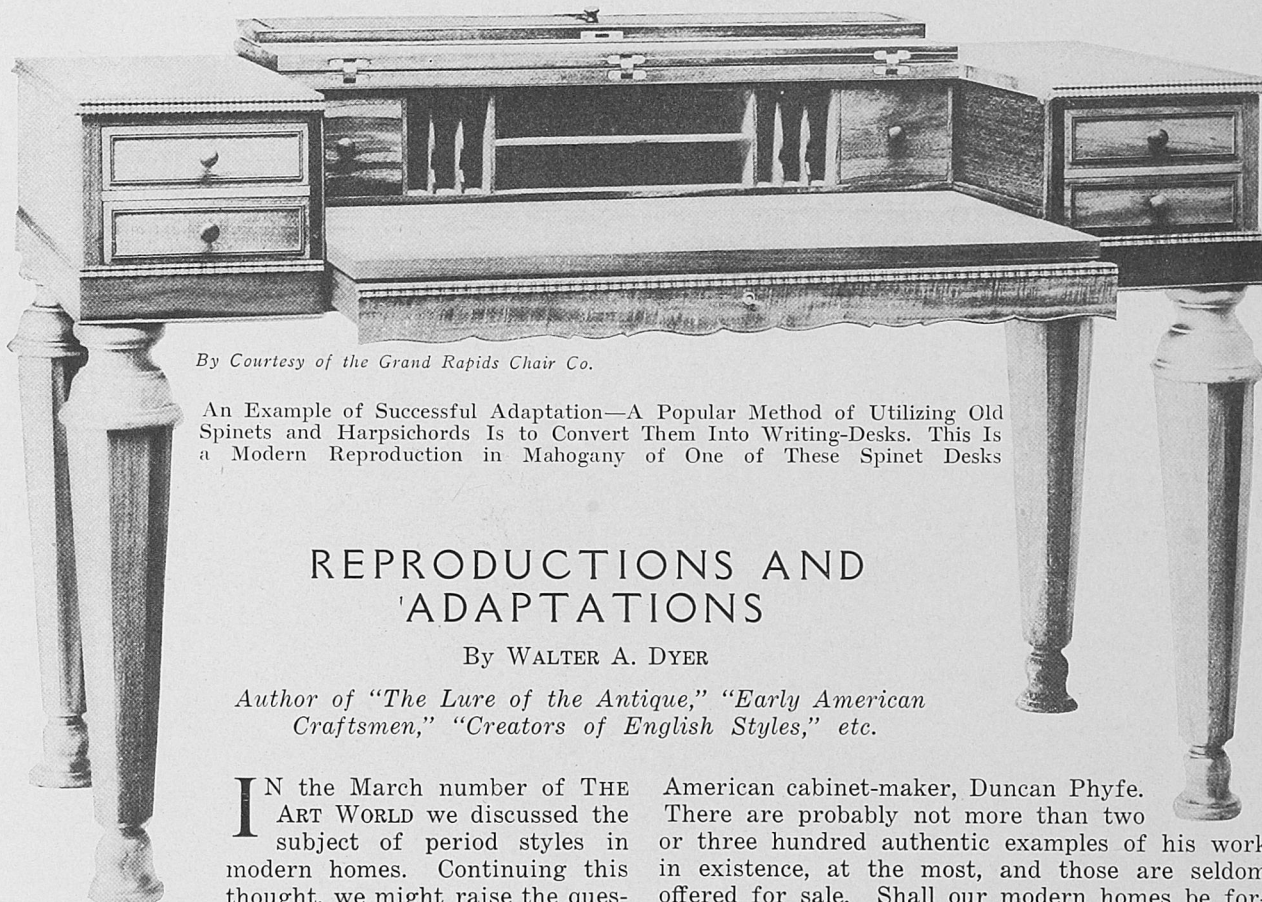
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By Courtesy of the Grand Rapids Chair Co.

An Example of Successful Adaptation—A Popular Method of Utilizing Old Spinets and Harpsichords Is to Convert Them Into Writing-Desks. This Is a Modern Reproduction in Mahogany of One of These Spinet Desks

REPRODUCTIONS AND 'ADAPTATIONS

By WALTER A. DYER

Author of "The Lure of the Antique," "Early American Craftsmen," "Creators of English Styles," etc.

IN the March number of THE ART WORLD we discussed the subject of period styles in modern homes. Continuing this thought, we might raise the question of how to get these styles in suitable furniture, and how to get them correct. If we grant the desirability of employing the period styles, it becomes necessary to seek a practical and not too expensive method of applying them. We cannot all afford to furnish our homes in genuine antiques, and if we could, there would not be enough to go around.

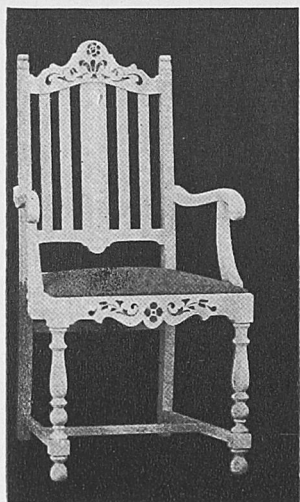
Already, many desirable kinds of antique furniture are so rare as to be practically unobtainable, and the prices asked are prohibitive. If, for any reason, you should wish to furnish a library in the style of the Italian Renaissance, there would be two courses open—to pay hundreds of dollars for each rare antique piece, or be content with reproductions.

Or take the exquisite and little known work of the

American cabinet-maker, Duncan Phyfe. There are probably not more than two or three hundred authentic examples of his work in existence, at the most, and those are seldom offered for sale. Shall our modern homes be forever deprived of furniture in this beautiful style, and the products of Phyfe's genius continue to be unknown, merely because of their rarity?

There are people who scorn reproductions, who will have the real thing or nothing. I can appreciate this point of view of the collector and the connoisseur, but that is not the way to develop the art instinct of the mass of the American people and an appreciation of good style in furniture. There is unquestionably a justification for reproduction. It is the only practicable means of beautifying our homes with the best results of past endeavor. It is the only way of preserving adequately our artistic heritage.

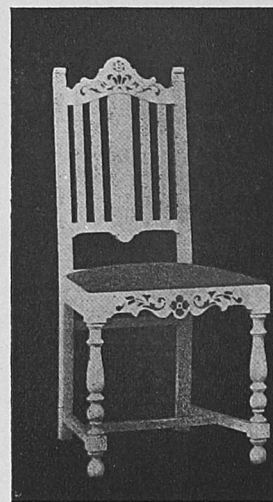
For centuries master minds have been working



Not Reproduction but
Adaptation



An Adaptation of a Gate-Leg Table That Does Not Pretend to Be a Reproduction. The Old 17th Century Gate-Legs Were of Unpainted Oak or Walnut with Round, Oval or Rectangular Tops.



Adaptation of Old Slat-
Back Chair

on the problems of design and applied art, of combining usefulness and beauty in home furnishings. Through a process of the survival of the fittest we have become the possessors of the best that they wrought. It is absurd to suppose that any modern designer, however talented, can produce anything as worthy as the styles developed through the progressive efforts of all the masters since the Renaissance. It is mere blindness to fail to perpetuate these things, and it is therefore folly to scorn the honest reproduction.

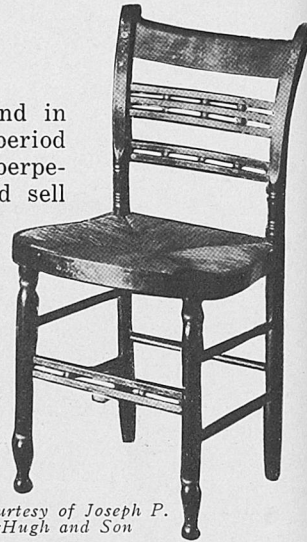
The piece of modern furniture designed in one of the historic styles is likely to be more consistent and beautiful, to possess more artistic significance, than any modern novelty. The designer of novelties has only his ingenuity, taste, and skill to guide him. The designer of reproductions has the whole field of past excellence to draw from. He can select as his models the best furniture forms ever produced. With this advantage, he is pretty sure to do a better job.

But with this advantage there goes a corresponding responsibility. The designer of reproductions can do incalculable damage by unwise selection and by inaccurate execution. It is his duty as well as his privilege to select for perpetuation only the best forms of other days, while to distort or misinterpret those styles is an artistic crime.

It is of supreme importance that modern reproductions of the period styles should be painstaking and accurate. Already the market is flooded with pseudo-reproductions and adaptations which are caricatures of the originals, a travesty on the purity of style. Furniture is made and sold as Jacobean or Sheraton or what-not which bears but a remote resemblance to authentic examples. For the purpose of cheapening construction or producing a more showy and salable effect, the styles are modified by the modern designer until they are something totally different from what they are represented to be, and the ignorance of the average purchaser appears to

make this a safe proceeding. And in addition to this distortion of the period styles, other inaccuracies are perpetrated. For example, we buy and sell Windsor chairs of solid or imitation mahogany, whereas the original Windsors were never made of mahogany.

How, then, is the average purchaser to know what he is getting? How may he dis-



By Courtesy of Joseph P. McHugh and Son

An Example of the Quaint and Unusual. A Reproduction "Fancy Chair" of 1810 with Rush Bottom and Stencil Decoration



By Courtesy of Joseph P. McHugh and Son

A Successful Reproduction. A Typical Queen Anne Lowboy with Inlaid Drawer Fronts

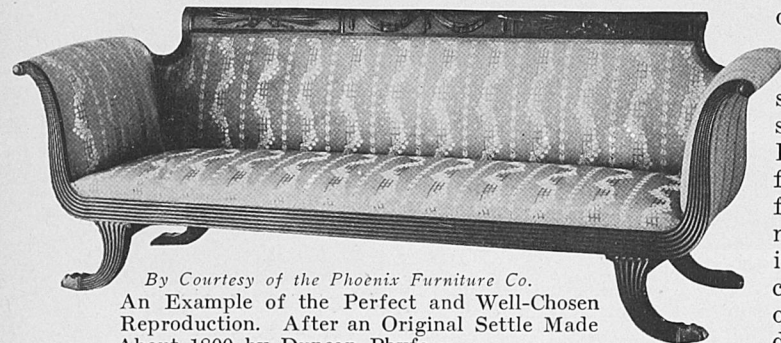
tinguish between the true and false designation of the merchant? Only, it seems to me, by education. When the public comes to demand accuracy and authenticity in reproductions of the period styles, the manufacturer will produce them, and not until

then. It is a clear case of supply and demand.

To guard against the purchase of the many careless, inaccurate, or misleading reproductions now on the market, one must become familiar with the authentic period styles. Knowledge is the only safeguard. Study antique originals in museums and private collections, and well-chosen illustrations of them in books and magazines. Cultivate a close observation of form and ornamental details, the hallmarks of the styles. A glance tells the expert whether or not a piece is a good reproduction; he recognizes the thing as a whole through his familiarity with the details. Good furniture is expensive, and it is merely business prudence for the prospective purchaser to become something of an expert in style.

This knowledge will prove profitable also to the purchaser of antique furniture, for it will help him to distinguish between the genuine and the fake antique—the reproduction made not for legitimate trade but for purposes of deception—though some of these bogus antiques are so cleverly manufactured as to deceive even the elect.

Of course, it is not necessary, nor, indeed, possible, that every piece of furniture in the home should be an exact reproduction of an antique piece. In our modern homes we desire forms of furniture, for practical purposes, which were not made in former days. An adaptation of the old style for modern needs then becomes justifiable, provided it is done by a designer who understands and conscientiously applies the fundamental principles of the style and its essential characteristics and details. Otherwise he produces an anachronism.



By Courtesy of the Phoenix Furniture Co.
An Example of the Perfect and Well-Chosen Reproduction. After an Original Settle Made About 1800 by Duncan Phyfe

The educated purchaser will distinguish these things. And sometimes, I believe, there is justification for the modification of a style, provided it is done with understanding and feeling, and is sold as an adaptation and not as a direct reproduction. But, on the whole, there is a danger in this.

Even among honest and correct reproductions there are good things and better things. The furniture trade displays a tendency to get into a rut and to follow arbitrary fashions. A few years ago everything was Colonial and Georgian; now it appears to be Jacobean, Queen Anne, and Louis XIV—more or less accurately rendered. The manufacturers seem to miss some of the very best things the past has to offer. If I were a furniture manufacturer, I believe I should try reproducing some of the more quaint and unusual pieces—something a little off the beaten track.

But it is not altogether the manufacturer's fault. The dealers, who are in turn guided by the popular demand, are a bit shy of these things. One of the

most beautiful and carefully executed reproductions I have seen recently is a Duncan Phyfe sofa or settee, which retails for about \$100, and which could not be found in any New York shop. Regarding it the manufacturer wrote me as follows: "It may seem strange to you, but the furniture dealer would not feel that this piece was one that he could readily sell, as it is so different from the modern settee that he sells every day. He is afraid to put it on his floor. This is what the manufacturer is continually up against in reproducing old furniture. By this we mean reproducing it exactly and not adapting it. The dealer insists on having period furniture, but he does not want it exactly like the original, but adapted to modern ideas of what it ought to be."

This is a sad commentary on the state of modern taste and knowledge, for in the last analysis these "modern ideas" come from the purchasing public. How long shall we tolerate "period furniture" in our homes that is "not exactly like the original."

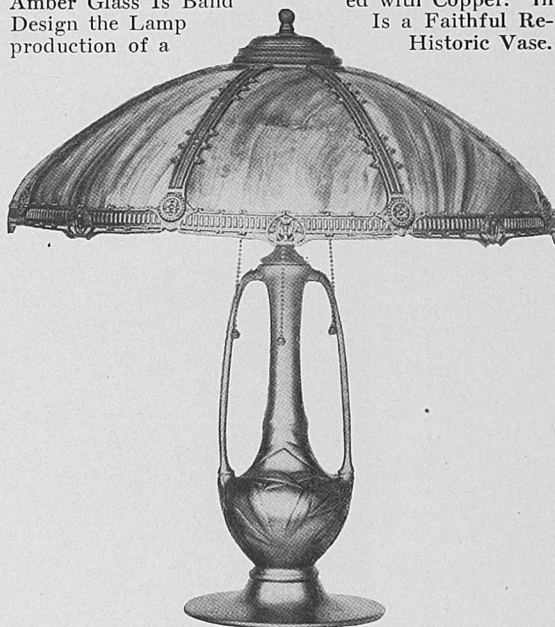
LAMPS AND LIGHTING

By CLARA BROWN LYMAN

Reading-Lamp for Gas or Electricity. The Base Is Metal with a Rich Copper Finish. The Shade of Amber Glass Is Band ed with Copper. In Design the Lamp Is a Faithful Re- production of a Historic Vase.



Blue and White Porcelain Vase Mounted on a Silver Base. The Shade of Blue Silk Is Lined with Highly Glazed White Satin Which Diffuses the Light and Hides the Light Source.



Photographs by courtesy of the Consolidated Gas Company and the N. Y. Edison Photographic Bureau



Boudoir Lamp in Golden Brown Tones. Base of Rich Hued Copper. The Shade Is of Glass with a Border Adapted from a Wall-Paper Design.

THE quest of the right kind of lamp for a home was never, perhaps, more interesting or more vigorously pursued than now, when the problem of the night lighting of various rooms for varying purposes has taken its rightful place as an important factor in the scheme of interior decoration alongside the selection of rugs, hangings and wall coverings. To recognize the qualities that go to make a good lamp is as essential as it is to know what constitutes a good painting. It is not enough to dismiss the subject of lamp selection with "I don't know about lighting but I know what I like." A bad picture may offend one's taste or

do violence to a sense of the fitness of things, but the wrong kind of lamp does actual physical violence to the eyesight as well as sinning against all the laws of harmony of line and color.

The fundamental purpose of lamps and fixtures is to carry light. Therefore to be consistent, the structure of the conveyor ought to show this meaning, definitely. Any design for a lamp or fixture that seeks to delude the observer is bad art as well as bad illuminating. Especially is this true of lamps which, more than fixtures, can be depended upon for the note of warmth and intimacy in a room. But to be decorative does not mean that a